

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (*Currently Amended*) Method of controlling exhaust flaps in a vehicle exhaust system comprising triggering a solenoid valve by an engine control unit to open or close the exhaust flaps as a function of at least one stored engine characteristics map which includes the rotational speed, engine load, the gear engaged and optionally additional control variables so as to selectively ~~increase~~ at least one of power, torque and change sound optimization and optionally at least one of power and torque.

2. (*Original*) Method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising storing a plurality of engine characteristic maps in the engine control unit.

3. (*Currently Amended*) Method as claimed in Claim 2, further comprising selecting ~~[[the]]~~an appropriate engine characteristic map based on preselectable criteria.

4. (*Previously Presented*) Method as claimed in Claim 3, further comprising switching between street vehicle operation and racecar operation with selection of the appropriate engine characteristic map.

5. (*Currently Amended*) Exhaust system, comprising triggerable exhaust flaps, a vacuum storage device operatively connected via a nonreturn valve to an intake system and to an exhaust system via a triggerable solenoid valve in parallel therewith, ~~and at least one engine characteristics map stored in an engine control unit for triggering~~ the solenoid valve being triggerable to open and close the exhaust flaps as a function of ~~[[the]]~~ at least one stored engine characteristics map which includes the rotational speed, engine load and the engaged gear and optionally additional control variables so as to ~~selectively increase at least one of power, torque~~ change and sound optimization and optionally at least one of power and torque.

6. (*Currently Amended*) Exhaust system as claimed in Claim 5, wherein an appropriate one of the engine characteristics maps is selected in the control unit from the at least one stored engine characteristics ~~maps~~ map depending on a preselectable requirement.

7. (*Currently Amended*) Exhaust system as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the selected appropriate engine characteristics map is configured to provide ~~a switch~~ switching between operation of the vehicle as a street vehicle and as a racecar.